

Workforce Relief Update

Education & the Workforce Committee • John Boehner, Chairman • October 16, 2001

Chao Set to Testify on Bush Plan to Help Displaced Workers

Labor Secretary Elaine Chao will testify before the Education & the Workforce Committee today on President Bush's plan to expand the federal "safety net" for workers displaced by the Sept. 11th attacks.

Republicans and Democrats have spent years putting in place a safety net in anticipation of a period of mass layoffs. But in the days since the attacks, Congress also made clear that **it will not turn its back on workers who are in danger of slipping through the cracks.**

In the days since the attacks, the Department of Labor has taken swift action to mobilize the safety net for displaced workers and their families. President Bush and Secretary Chao have outlined a series of reasonable steps Congress should take in the days ahead to bring further security to displaced workers as they look for new work.

Education & the Workforce Chairman John Boehner (R-OH), along with his colleagues Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX) and Rep. Buck McKeon (R-CA), on Friday introduced the legislative version of the President's Back to Work plan. The proposal is designed to (1) help those who are losing their jobs because of the September 11 attacks; (2) put people back to work to help get the economy moving again; and (3) help ensure that displaced workers have access to health care.

Chairman Boehner has made it clear that he will work with the President and members to do everything in Congress's power to help workers return to work as quickly as possible -- and in the meantime, that they and their families have adequate relief.

Message of the Day

The President's Back to Work plan is a compassionate one -- not just because it provides the flexibility and resources to help workers in need -- but because it recognizes that a displaced worker's true goal, ultimately, is to return to work.

- ❑ *The Bush plan utilizes existing programs designed to help workers.*
- ❑ *It can be implemented quickly.*
- ❑ *The proposal doesn't create a whole new bureaucracy.*
- ❑ *It provides flexibility to meet specific challenges at the state level.*

DAILY FACTS

- The Bush plan temporarily expands the National Emergency Grant program and authorizes \$3 billion to help workers during this recovery period. This emergency expansion will be maintained for 18 months.
- Grants may be used to (1) pay up to 75 percent of health care premiums covered by COBRA for up to 10 months for laid off or dislocated workers, (2) provide additional weeks of income support for those who have used up their unemployment; and (3) provide additional dollars for job search and training services.
- While some are proposing a much more expansive remedy, the President advocates an approach that can be implemented quickly without creating a new bureaucracy.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Many who call North Texas home have lost their jobs since September 11th. The [President's plan] will give people much needed peace of mind about their health insurance and pocket books." -- **Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX), chairman of the Employer-Employee Relations Subcommittee, October 12, 2001**